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SEPTEMBER 2021 | VOLUME 12 | ISSUE 9

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# GROUND COVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.



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a fairy door. Page 10

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# Keeping our heads and homes above water: flooding and health in Detroit

**PETER LARSON**  
Groundcover contributor

Water is essential to human life, but water can also be a hazard to human health. Climate change has led to ever more unpredictable and intense weather events. With more than 80 severe weather warnings in Southeast Michigan this year, this summer is one of the most unusual in Michigan's history.

Climate change and severe weather events impact everyone, but residents of Detroit are at incredible risk for severe impacts from intense weather and rainfall events. Large amounts of water in a short amount of time challenge Detroit's aging water infrastructure to divert waters away from the City and into the river.

Detroit has a combined sewer outflow system. That is, water runoff (water that hits the ground from rains) and sewage are diverted to a wastewater treatment plant and then into the Detroit River, through the same pipes and infrastructure. An intense weather event overburdens that system so that water, industrial runoff and sewage either get backed up into the City or directly into the Detroit River.

This presents incredible challenges to the City. Effluent and sewage back up into the streets — and worse yet into people's homes — through basement drains. During an intense rainfall event, it is not uncommon to hear reports of people having raw sewage in their basements.

Further complicating this situation is the poor state of Detroit's housing. Structures in Detroit are overwhelmingly old. Detroit's low income population has difficulty keeping up with necessary repairs to aging houses,

which require roof, window and basement upgrades. This means that some people live with open holes in the roof, open spaces around windows and cracks in basement walls, all of which allow water to enter the home, even during a normal rainfall.

We also found that the greatest determinants of flooding were housing conditions. People with holes in the roof or cracks in the basement were more likely to experience flooding. We also found the renters were at very high risk for flooding, implying that landlords could be part of the solution to solving this dire problem.

These two factors, an overburdened sewage and runoff system and inadequate housing, present a dual challenge to the residents of Detroit. Catastrophic events like we saw in 2014 and in June 2021 led to a massive inundation of water that upended lives and threatened health. But normal rainfall events create a constant level of water and moisture in the home which allows molds and microbes to thrive.

Molds and microbes in the home present a major public health challenge. Constant exposure to mold has been associated with the development of asthma and respiratory problems.

The percentage of people with asthma in Detroit is double that of the State of Michigan, and is one of the highest in the country. Asthma hospitalizations in Detroit are almost 3.7 times that of Michigan as a whole. Black males are more likely to have and be hospitalized for asthma than any other group in Michigan.

In our recent study with partners from the University of Michigan,

U-M Dearborn and Wayne State University, we found that more than 65% of Detroiters experienced basement flooding, either as a result of rainfall or sewer backups. We also found that people with asthma were more likely to live in a home that experiences flooding. We also found that, when controlling for neighborhood factors such as elevation and socio-economics — increasing percentages of African American residents are predictive of flooding.

We found that flooding impacts all Detroit residents and that these impacts are felt every day. However, as a whole, these impacts are much higher than the rest of the state, and the low income nature of Detroit means that the poorest and most marginalized of our State's

population are at the highest risk for not only flooding, but also for severe health conditions like asthma.

Every person has a right to a safe and healthy place to live. Right now, most Detroiters do not have access to safe and healthy living environments. We need to change this situation.

We need to create programs that treat housing conditions like any other kind of public health problem. Health begins at home. Providing money to improve the living spaces of Detroiters could go a long way to improving baseline health, prevent serious conditions like asthma and lift up people's lives to create a more equitable and just world.

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Bethlehem Church is home of the Groundcover office



### SEPTEMBER 2021 EVENTS AT BETHLEHEM

In person events are just starting to resume at BUCC. We ask that you visit the church website at: [bethlehem-ucc.org](http://bethlehem-ucc.org) for the most up-to-date calendar and event information.



Sunday Worship Times  
10:00 am In-person  
and via Radio Broadcast  
WAAM 1600 AM

## GROUNDCOVER

### Mission

Creating opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.

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## MEET YOUR VENDOR



### Jay Gordon, vendor No. 533

**In one sentence, who are you?**  
I'm Jay, a local Navy veteran.

**Where do you usually sell Groundcover News?** Main and Liberty Streets in downtown Ann Arbor.

**What is your favorite thing to do in Ann Arbor?** Eat. There are so many delicious options.

**What is something about you that someone on the street wouldn't know?** I am an avid reader.

**What is your favorite spot in Ann Arbor?** The YMCA. I love going to the gym.

**What motivates you to work hard selling Groundcover News?** Promoting written pieces by other vendors.

**What is the best way to start the day?** With prayer and meditation.

**What are your hobbies?** Reading and watching documentaries.

**What song do you have completely memorized?** "Juicy" by Notorious B.I.G.

**If you had a warning label, what would it say?** Warning! Good vibes only.

**What's the most interesting thing that happened to you when selling Groundcover? Meeting a Navy vet with the same job I had.**

**What is the best thing about selling Groundcover News?** It allows me to be self-empowered and an entrepreneur.

**What is the most impressive thing you know how to do?** Be optimistic and know how to persevere.

**What do you wish you knew more about?** Life.

## Why I love Groundcover

I have been selling Groundcover for at least three years. Groundcover is very important to me. I love Groundcover because Groundcover is a group of people trying to help ourselves and others when we can. I love to sell the Groundcover paper and keep some papers for myself. I love to look in Groundcover because it is a very beautiful paper and it is interesting.



**DENISE SHEARER**  
Groundcover vendor No. 485

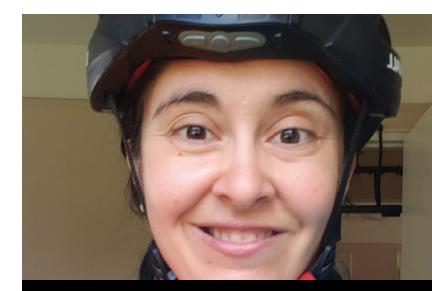
town. I love greeting people and maybe making friends. I have met a few new people through Groundcover. I usually sell by

Which Wich, Crazy Wisdom Bookstore and sometimes in downtown Ypsilanti.

When the pandemic happened, I couldn't sell papers so I began to write articles. Since I've been writing articles, I've shared about happy memories and other things that make me happy.

I am thankful that Lit K. (another vendor) introduced me to Groundcover. I think I'll be selling Groundcover papers for more years to come.

## Support my challenge to fight kids' cancer!



**SANDRA SABATINI**  
Groundcover vendor No. 233

This September, I am taking part in the Great Cycle Challenge to fight pediatric cancer!

Why? Because right now, cancer is the biggest cause of death for children from disease in the United States. Over 15,700 children are diagnosed every year, and sadly, 38 children die of cancer every week. Kids should be living life, not fighting for it.

So I am raising funds through my challenge to help these kids and support the Children's

Cancer Research Fund to allow them to continue their work developing lifesaving treatments and finding a cure for childhood cancer.

Please support me by making a donation to give these kids the brighter futures they deserve. Go to <https://greatcyclechallenge.com/Riders/SandraSabatini>. All donations made on September 15th will be matched.

Your support will change little lives.

## More improvements means \$\$ in drivers' pockets



**KEVIN SPANGLER**  
Groundcover vendor No. 307

Boober tours continues to strive and grow. We have a new sponsor and used those funds to build two more trailers — one to show Treehouse 603 our appreciation and one to satisfy our newest sponsor, STIIZY, a marijuana vape cartridge company.

We have made the new trailers a combination of our last

three trailers, putting all of the positive traits together to make a perfect trailer. The new trailer will boast a complete wrap-around lightbox.

We have upgraded four cabs to motors this month making a total of 12 motor cabs and created the first \$2500 base pay job of Boober, something we have been working on for years.



# COVID-19 Delta variant surges: America faces a pandemic of the unvaccinated

*"Folks are supposed to have common sense. It's time to start blaming the unvaccinated folks, not the regular folks. It is the unvaccinated folks that are letting us down."*

— Governor Kay Ivey, Republican of Alabama.

In his famous poem, *The Waste Land*, writer and poet T.S. Eliot said, "April is the cruelest month of the year." The months of April 2020 and 2021 were very cruel to Americans and the world.

As we gradually made progress in subsequent months of 2021 with high levels of vaccination in California, the Pacific Northwest, the Midwest and the Northeast, the CDC, along with President Biden, announced in June that vaccinated individuals could interact with other vaccinated individuals without masks. The rates of infections, hospitalizations, and deaths among the vaccinated were going down sharply. In Michigan, Gov. Whitmer's June 17 press release announced, "Gov. Gretchen Whitmer today accelerated the end of all COVID-19 epidemic orders on gathering and masking as COVID-19 cases continue to plummet following increased vaccinations. Beginning June 22, capacity in both indoor and outdoor settings will increase to 100% and the state will no longer require residents to wear a face mask."

From the White House on June 2, President Joe Biden offered the following remarks: "The Vice President and I would like to lay out our plan for June, to counter—continue, I should say, our successful fight against the pandemic as we approach the July 4th date. In just four months, thanks to the American people, we have made incredible progress getting people vaccinated quickly, efficiently, and equitably. Nearly 170 million Americans of every party, every background, every walk of life have stepped up, rolled up their sleeves, and

Hospitals and Intensive Care Units are full to capacity in those Southern States. After signing executive orders to stop face masks requirements in Florida



**WILL SHAKESPEARE**  
Groundcover vendor No. 258

gotten the shot. 52 percent of adults are now fully vaccinated, including 75 percent of all seniors. Twenty eight states and the District of Columbia have achieved 50 percent of adults being vaccinated in their jurisdictions."

## Delta variant spreads like wildfire

The spread of the Delta variant all over the American landscape in July was a surprise to many people. To the scientific community, it has become a pandemic of the unvaccinated which has turned around the improving infection, hospitalization and death statistics of the previous months. States with low vaccination rates such as Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida and Texas experienced spikes in all categories in July, August, and beyond. On July 17, Politico Magazine reported a response from the Alabama Governor regarding her ideas for getting people to vaccinate, and for mitigating the pandemic-related suffering in her state. She said, "I don't know! You tell me!! Folks are supposed to have common sense. It's time to start blaming the unvaccinated folks. It is the unvaccinated folks that are letting us down."

The Huffington Post of August 8, 2021 reported these facts: "The most important legal precedent on vaccines specifically is the 1905 case called Jacobson v Massachusetts in which the Supreme Court upheld a State Law requiring smallpox vaccination for adults. Just this week, a panel from a federal appeals court cited Jacobson when it upheld, unanimously, COVID-19 vaccine requirements for students in Indiana University."

Judge Frank Easterbrook, a highly respected Reagan-appointed conservative judge authored the ruling. Easterbrook wrote, "People who do not want to be vaccinated may go elsewhere."

Many assert that a basic justification for vaccine mandates is that your freedom does not include the freedom to endanger the rest of your community.

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# Shelter Association Recuperative Care reopens in Washtenaw County

**ANDRE VASHER**  
Groundcover contributor

Re-opening after gaining traction in late 2019, the Recuperative Care program run by the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County returns in full force. The Recuperative Care program first opened at the Robert J. Delonis Center to provide immediate shelter and part-time nursing support to homeless persons discharged from hospitals but who also need follow up care, education and further recovery.

Nicholas Bagley, a law school professor at the University of Michigan, compared skipping vaccines to assaulting people just because you feel like it. He further noted that we require kids to get vaccinated for all sorts of illness before they go to public schools. Otherwise, their bodies could be used as vectors to harm others.

Many K-12 students started classes during the second week of August. There has been significant controversy about face mask requirements in classrooms and vaccine recommendations for teachers and students 12 years and older. Some parents whose children are younger than 12 and do not have the option of an FDA-approved vaccine worry that their kids will catch the highly transmissible Delta variant. Children now account for about 15% of the COVID-19 cases. NPR reported on August 10, 2021 that nearly 94,000 kids got COVID-19 last week — A 31 percent increase over the roughly 72,000 cases reported a week earlier.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and Children Hospital Association believe the new COVID-19 Delta variant has been increasing among children.

The Recuperative Care program aims to reduce hospital stays, provide patient education and healing, and find permanent housing for each participant. Due to the COVID-19 crisis response, the Shelter Association closed the Recuperative Care program in March 2020, but now it's back and picking up steam.

Homeless, medically fragile people often have nowhere to go once discharged from the hospital, and

sometimes a bed at the Delonis Center may not be available. They may also need specialized care that other discharged patients often receive in a rehab center or through family support structures. Patients experiencing homelessness are often discharged from the hospital onto the streets.

Alone, with no place to heal, infection, injury and worsening health can lead to expensive hospital readmissions and dash hope of finding long term housing.

Through the Recuperative Care program, homeless clients are currently able to stay at a local Ann Arbor hotel due to a federal grant from the CDC.

Not only will recovering patients have shelter, but they will also receive nursing assistance, meals and support provided by a combination of the Shelter Association and Packard Health Clinic.

Does the Recuperative Care program work? A recent client participating in this program has learned to deal with his kidney disease, found an apartment and recently secured a job. Housed and healed, clients live longer, happier lives.

Benefits of the Recuperative Care program include:

- Increased access to primary care and other services makes care manageable and sustainable

- Cost effective treatment reduces strain on emergency medical services

- Integrated case management that addresses underlying barriers and creates the bridge to housing for clients

The Washtenaw County program is one of nine national Recuperative Care programs that received funding from a \$1.6 million CDC Foundation grant. In partnership with the National Institute for Medical Respite Care, the CDC Foundation funding enables programs to mitigate barriers to care resulting from inadequate facilities or physical space; insufficient staffing and personnel; and insufficient medical equipment.

Clients often get referred to the Shelter's Recuperative Care program by a social worker or discharge planner at University of Michigan or Saint Joseph Mercy hospitals. Word of mouth is also helping to expand the reach of this important service.

## Discovering America

**KEN PARKS**  
Groundcover vendor No. 490

In 1891 Jose Marti was writing about Our America based on his experience as a Cuban who spent some years as a journalist in the United States of America. He observed how the giant of the north was concluding 300 years of Indian Wars that began with the Spanish discovery of Turtle Island. They called it the West Indies first but the New World gradually became known as America. As the United States of America developed from Monroe Doctrine to Manifest Destiny, what Marti called Our America began to refer to the USA as the "Other America."

We encourage our readers and their loved ones to take this new Delta variant very seriously. People who are vaccinated can still be infected by the new virus and spread it. Infections of vaccinated people are referred to as breakthrough cases. Booster vaccination shots reduce breakthrough cases. An August 12 article from the public health journal *Intelligencer* is titled, "Don't Panic, But Breakthrough Cases May Be a Bigger Problem than You've Been Told - Current public health messaging may underestimate the scale and risk." Be careful!

If you saw *The Godfather* you may remember a small mountain of steps in front of the University of Havana. At the bottom is a traffic circle and small park with a monument and plaque to Jose Antonio Mella. "Struggle for the social revolution in America. It is not a utopia for crazy fanatics. It is a struggle for the next step in the advance of history."

The vision is profound. Most

Cubans know these words and look forward to a day of solidarity with all the peoples of America. The Europeans and Africans mix with the many original people who carry the reality of Turtle Island and the knowledge of the Seventh Generation that the ancestors spoke of. You think you are killing us but we are seeds that bear fruit in seven generations. The water protectors of Standing Rock and now Line 3 in Minnesota are active in many states, including Line 5 at the Straits of Mackinac in Michigan.

There is a growing awareness that America was born on Turtle Island. A good way to start any meeting or social gathering is to honor the caretakers of the land. Ann Arbor has a sign in West Park honoring the Native American Trail. Michigan is on the land of the Three Council Fires, the Anishinabe.

Are you thinking of land restoration and reparations? How can we take our proper place among the peoples of America? We may begin with a local council fire and offerings of sage, sweet grass and tobacco. The air is still part of the commons we share. To

**Celebrate International Peace Week at the Ann Arbor City Commons, September 19-25, 2021!**

Sunday: Imagine a Park, 12-3 p.m.

Monday: Bring Art, 12-3 p.m. The commons will be open for art, Sukkah building and storytelling 6-9 p.m.

Tuesday: Peace Day opens 12 p.m. Peace table storytellings at 2 p.m. Women in Black language laundering at 3 p.m.

Wednesday: Discussion Tables 12-3 p.m. "One Struggle, Many Fronts."

Thursday: Book tables, 10 a.m.-7 p.m. "Pieces of the Peace" Open Mic video, 12 p.m.

Friday: Books, flea market, pot-latch, destuffing Bazaar (sharing, caring, helping, healing) 9 a.m.-7 p.m.

Saturday: Stating Visions, 12-3 p.m. Commons open for social and dance 6-9 p.m.

**Library Lane and Fifth Avenue**

# Local renters and housing activists say no to landlord games

On August 12, the Washtenaw Area Apartment Association's "Kickball Game and Picnic," a networking event for landlords, had some unexpected attendees: tenants.

A broad coalition of tenants' rights activists gathered in protest at Frisinger Park with the objective of showing tenant power. They demanded greater tenant protections and exhibited that they are willing to fight to ensure they would no longer fall victim to landlord abuses.

Although the CDC did reinstate the moratorium on evictions, the coalition believes evictions due to poverty should never happen. They believe evictions are landlord violence enacted through the police on the tenants.

Three hours before the scheduled kickball game was to begin, members of the Ann Arbor Tenants Union, University of Michigan Graduate Employees' Organization Housing Caucus, Washtenaw Camp Outreach, Washtenaw General Defense Committee and more gathered for a barbecue adjacent to the kickball field, occupying all the picnic tables. Upon arrival of the landlords, groups of individuals bearing signs and banners stood in the field and prevented the game from happening.



**LINDSAY CALKA**  
Publisher



Tenant activist addresses Washtenaw Apartment's Association after occupying the kickball field, preventing the game from happening.

During the hour of the scheduled game, the protestors stood in a circle on the field and spoke out about "landlord horror stories" and rental struggles. Some speakers also shared examples of decommunified housing in Ann Arbor, like housing cooperatives.

These public demonstrations are only a small part of the work that a growing number of tenants, housing activists and houseless folks are engaging in to use their collective power. On July 20, renters in Ann Arbor won an amendment to the Early Leasing Ordinance (ELO). As it previously stood, this ordinance moved the timeline up for seeking housing and signing leases to October — almost a whole year before move-in. This ordinance, specifically affecting student renters, allowed for

coercion by landlords into new leases and resulted in higher rents. The amendment prevents landlords from showing units until seven months into the lease.

Amir Fleischmann, member of the U-M Graduate Employees' Organization and organizer for the ELO amendment, attended the many Ann Arbor City Council public hearings that discussed the ordinance change. He recounted, "We heard landlords seethe and fume over the prospect of giving tenants even this modest protection. We heard landlords threaten to sue the city over their right to exclude people from housing and lament the loss of their power to discriminate against

prospective tenants with criminal records. The landlords are grossly out of touch with the reality of being a renter in Washtenaw County."

To communicate these realities to the landlords themselves, the group marched from the field to a nearby area to which the Washtenaw Area Apartment Associations' members had moved. The activists chanted loudly along to a drum to prevent the landlords from networking. The action ended with multiple speeches directed at the landlords, shaming them for prioritizing profit over the human right to housing.

# Representative Cori Bush fought to extend the eviction moratorium — and won!

On July 31, a woman unfolded a canvas chair at the steps of the capitol building. In her own words, she "refused to accept that Congress could leave for vacation while 11 million people faced eviction," just as the Delta variant of COVID began to spike. She and her supporters would stay there until the government acted. Just five days later, the CDC extended the eviction moratorium to protect residents in communities of high transmission. (See Editor's Note.)

This is no ordinary woman.

U.S. House Representative Cori Bush represents the people of St. Louis and Ferguson, among others in Missouri's first congressional district, in every sense of the word. Unlike the majority of her colleagues, she refuses PAC money and remains only accountable to the people who voted her into office.

Moreover, she has lived the experiences of those she advocates for, such as people of color and the unhoused. She knows firsthand what it is like to sleep in her car or outside and wouldn't wish it on anyone. As she wrote in her *TIME* opinion piece:

"Today, as a Congresswoman, I remember what it was like for us to live out of my car when I'm thinking about how to legislate on behalf of my district. I think about how society wanted me to believe that being unhoused was my fault. We have a deeply rooted misconception in our country that unhoused people have done something to deserve their conditions when the reality is that unhoused people are living the consequences of our government's failure to secure the basic necessities people need to survive."

Rep. Bush has always been someone dedicated to the people in her community, even during her early working life when she served as a registered nurse, clergy and childcare worker. Moreover, she had for decades been a community organizer, dedicated to aiding those less fortunate. It was only after the tragic murder of Michael Brown Jr. by a now-terminated police officer and the consequential 400-plus days of protest that she reluctantly entered politics to do everything within her power to protect her children and neighbors.

Entrusted with political power, Rep. Bush has stayed true to her mission to secure justice for people of color and advocate for the unhoused. In her first term, Representative Bush has already pushed extensively for universal healthcare, transparency of FBI surveillance of Black activism, stopping the failed war on drugs, ending the



**BEN GIRODIAS**  
Groundcover contributor

own. Moreover, you can't pay back rent with wages that barely cover this month's rent. For this reason, an eviction moratorium is a necessary emergency protocol that keeps people housed until a more comprehensive solution can be fully deployed.

However, the Biden administration, citing legal concerns just two days before the August Congressional recess, failed to extend the current eviction moratorium that was due to expire August 3. Congress failed to pass any legislation to extend it. There was no protection in place. And our legislators were about to go on vacation.

Representative Cori Bush refused to believe this is the best we could do.

At this point, without any options she brought her chair to the Capitol steps, calling on all supporters to come down with her and demand justice. And people came. Rep. Pressley and Rep. Omar joined Rep. Bush on the steps that very night. By the next morning, over thirty people were at the steps to show their support. Rep. Ocasio-Cortez, Rep. Bowman, Sen. Warren, Sen. Sanders, Sen. Schumer among others were soon to follow. Locally, the Ann Arbor Tenants Union took to twitter, urging us to call our local representatives to protect the well-being of our communities.

And it worked.

On August 3, the CDC announced an extension to the eviction moratorium until October 3. Granted it was more specifically targeted, but this still provided the necessary protections to minimize communal spread. This has impacted people all across the United States, including locally.

On August 4, the Washtenaw County Health Department recommended, based on the substantial level of local transmission (as defined by the CDC), for all people to wear masks indoors. This makes Washtenaw County a hotspot, thereby qualifying residents to be under the protection of the extended eviction moratorium.

In her letter, Rep. Bush highlights, "Black and brown communities have been disproportionately impacted by the global pandemic due to the compounding effects of wage, housing, and health discrimination." She goes on to emphasize the magnitude of the problem: the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau estimates that millions of people are at risk of eviction due to unpaid rent. For many, this has been the result of being laid off during the pandemic and difficulties navigating the complex and insufficient government safety nets: to no fault of their

push for the revolutionary change we need, often through activism outside the realm of electoral politics. The usual political channels didn't work. Visible protest did.

Moving forward, a brighter future is possible if we come together to stand up for what we believe in. The organizing efforts of leaders like Rep. Bush has shown us all that we can do better, reminding us "that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Be angry. Organize.

*Editor's Note: The Supreme Court ruled August 26 to end the temporary stay on a lower court ruling seeking to overturn the federal eviction moratorium issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Supreme Court's ruling invalidates the federal eviction moratorium, eliminating vital eviction protections that have kept millions of households — predominantly people of color — stably housed.*



**A<sup>2</sup>ZERO** is Ann Arbor's aggressive and audacious plan to achieve a just transition to community-wide carbon neutrality by 2030.

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# Community service in Selma as voting rights battles rage on

## WILL SHAKESPEARE

University of Michigan students are known for their widespread community service and volunteer efforts. This social justice commitment is often attributed to the presidential campaign speech of John F. Kennedy on October 14, 1960. An estimated 10,000 University of Michigan students at the Michigan Union heard Kennedy propose the creation of a federal government agency which would be called the Peace Corps.

There were thunderous cheers and enthusiasm when Kennedy asked how many of the students would be willing to serve their country and the cause of peace by living and working in the developing world. The Peace Corps reports that since 1961, more than 240,000 Americans have served, many from U-M.

VISTA (Volunteer in Service of America) was established in 1965 as part of President Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty." President Clinton incorporated that program into his new concept of community service and service learning titled, "AmeriCorps." A faculty member from the U-M School of Social Work and the founding director of U-M Ginsberg Center was a principal adviser to the White House Office of AmeriCorps. Many U-M graduates have joined the AmeriCorps programs, including Claire and Cecilia who spent their Alternative Spring Break this year assisting underserved students in Detroit's public school system.

Another group of U-M students who are affiliated with St. Mary's Student Parish of Ann Arbor traveled to Selma, and later to Montgomery's Equal Justice Initiative which was founded by Mr. Bryan Stevenson, U-M's Spring 2021 Distinguished Commencement Speaker. The personal accounts of these visits provided by Lauren and Ryan follow this historical account.

## For the People Act

Recent headlines trumpet new voter restrictions and efforts to make voting more difficult for poor and minority communities. The Supreme Court decision this summer upholding two Arizona laws allows state governments to impose more restrictions on voters in the name of fighting potential voter fraud. In counter-moves, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 4 (The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019 and 2020) and H.R. 1 (For the People Act). Those voting rights restoration laws, which provide more ease and accessibility, are still languishing in the U.S. Senate.

In a July presentation at Howard University, Vice President Kamala Harris said, "Your right to vote is your power ... Don't let them take away your power!"

Amendment in 1868. It provided freed men and women equal protection guarantees, due process, and all the rights and privileges of citizenship, including the right to vote.

When Southern states continued to deny black men the freedom to vote, Congress added the 15th Amendment in 1870 which specified that Black men have the right to vote. This led to the creation of the Jim Crow laws and a surge of Ku Klux Klan activity which made it very difficult for Black Americans to vote in the South. For almost 100 years, Black voters were tasked with literacy tests, to prove that their grandfather was a resident of the state, proof of property ownership, and other barriers to prevent them from voting.

The struggle for the Voting Rights Act of 1965 started with a march from Selma to Montgomery. John Lewis was 22 years old when he helped to organize the first march from Selma through the Edmund Pettus Bridge. On March 7, 1965 the peaceful marchers were attacked by state troopers. Many of the marchers were savagely beaten, and retreated. John Lewis sustained a bloody injury to his forehead.

There was a national outcry against the violence toward the peaceful marchers. The next march was led by Dr. Martin Luther King and the leaders of the Southern Christian Leadership Council. They marched peacefully and freely from Selma to Montgomery. The same year, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act and President Lyndon B. Johnson signed it.

## From the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to John Lewis Voting Rights Bill

Selma, Alabama was "Ground Zero" of the struggle to achieve voting rights and voting freedom for African Americans in the Southern regions of America. Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation letter to Congress in September 1863 granted freedom to all slaves. The Union army enforced the civil war order until it became the 13th Amendment in 1865. The 1866 Civil Rights Act became the 14th

## My Alternative Spring Break Selma Experience



Ryan Armbrustmacher



Lauren Wojciechowski

"The first week of our summer break, I and six other University of Michigan students participated in St Mary Student Parish's Alternative Spring Break program to Selma, Alabama.

In Selma, our group worked with Edmundite missions for a week, serving and immersing ourselves in the community there. With Edmundite missions, we did a variety of things. Each day we helped prep over 300 lunches and 300 dinners that we later distributed to the residents of Selma. Additionally, we spent time with kids at their after school program working on different science projects with them and playing with them. Lastly, we aided Edmundite missions with an assortment of maintenance projects on their campus throughout the week.

What was most meaningful to me, however, wasn't the work we did, but the people we met and the conversations we had with them. Sister Mary, who runs the afterschool program among other things, showed me what it means to be on fire for the work you do. She seemingly never got bored or frustrated with the kids, and was always coming up with new activities to do with them, from making robots out of cardboard to crafting Mothers' Day presents for their moms.

The men and women who worked at Bronco, the nutrition center, were equally inspirational. Day in and day out, 365 days a year, they work tirelessly to provide meals to whoever needs them. As most of them had been there for several years, they definitely knew the most efficient way to do each task, yet they each showed incredible patience as our group of volunteers learned the ropes.

I chose to go on this trip this year because I have learned so much about myself and about communities very different from my own on every ASB I have participated in. Witnessing the poverty and lack of opportunity the people of Selma live in was absolutely heartbreaking.

In preparation for our week in Selma, our group engaged in dialogue and spent time familiarizing ourselves with the historical and present day racial justice issues facing our country. Spending time in a majority African American community was another incredible opportunity this trip provided me. Through this immersion, I came to a great appreciation for the ideas and perspectives that can be gained through diversity and came face to face with the injustices in our country.

My time in Selma has helped me see beauty in each and every human and inspired me to continue seeking opportunities for service and immersion in communities different from my own back in Michigan."

## Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover is a non-profit, and paper vendors are self-employed contractors, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

### The following is our **Vendor Code of Conduct**, which every vendor reads

and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

• Groundcover will be distributed for a voluntary donation. I agree not to

ask for more than the cover price or solicit donations by any other means.

• When selling Groundcover, I will always have the current monthly issue of Groundcover available for customer purchase.

• I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper or selling past monthly issues.

• I will wear and display my badge when selling papers and refrain from wearing it or other Groundcover gear when engaged in other activities.

• I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcover vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended

or terminated.

• I agree to treat all customers, staff,

and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.

• I will not sell Groundcover under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

• I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.

• I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.

• I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover.

• I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property

or stores unless there is permission from the owner.

• I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor in downtown areas. I will also abide by the Vendor corner policy.

• I understand that Groundcover strives to be a paper that covers topics of homelessness and poverty while providing sources of income for the homeless. I will try to help in this effort and spread the word.

If you would like to report a violation of the Vendor Code please email contact@groundcovernews.com or fill out the contact form on our website.

  
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\*Limit 1 per household per year

## Participants must:

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- Live in Washtenaw County
- Have a total monthly household income less than \$1,986 (single person) or \$2,686 (2 person household)

For more information, contact Hannah Lane

(734) 492-0499 / laneh@washtenaw.org

To find the farmers market nearest you, head to [www.washtenawmarkets.org](http://www.washtenawmarkets.org) or find us on social media





# Mom's pasta salad

**JUSTEN WHITE**  
Groundcover vendor No. 543

## Ingredients

16 oz rotini pasta  
 2/3 cup red onion  
 16 oz cherry tomatoes  
 2 sweet peppers  
 1 cucumber  
 1/4 cup black or green olives  
 1/2 cup red wine vinegar  
 2 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice  
 2 1/2 teaspoon fresh garlic  
 1 1/2 teaspoon sugar  
 1 teaspoon dijon mustard  
 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning  
 3/4 cup olive olive  
 crumbled feta (optional)



## Directions

In a medium pot, boil water and cook pasta until al dente.

Dice red onion, cucumber and sweet peppers. Halve cherry tomatoes and olives, removing the pits of the olives as you cut.

In a separate bowl, whisk together red wine vinegar, lemon juice, garlic, sugar, dijon mustard, Italian seasoning and olive oil.

Add pasta and vegetables to a bowl and fold in dressing. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Sprinkle feta cheese on top if desired.

## PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

3	9	1	4	5	7	6	8	2
2	5	7	6	8	9	3	1	4
4	6	8	2	1	3	9	5	7
5	7	2	3	9	8	1	4	6
9	1	6	5	4	2	8	7	3
8	4	3	7	6	1	2	9	5
1	2	5	8	7	6	4	3	9
6	8	4	9	3	5	7	2	1
7	3	9	1	2	4	5	6	8

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
E	N	I	D		A	M	I	D	S	T	A	L
G	O	N	E		B	E	N	I	C	E	M	O
Y	E	S	V		R	G	I	N	I	A	I	T
P	A	T	I	N	A		G	E	E	22	O	N
T	R	A	C	K		C	O	R	N	B	R	O
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68												
69												

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## St. Francis invites you

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 who loves each one of us and who  
 is really present here to save us.

"If God were your Father, you would love me,  
 for I came from God and am here;  
 I did not come on my own, but he sent me."

+ Christ Jesus (John 8:42)

## Mass Times:

**Saturday Vigil 5 pm & 7 pm (español);**

**Sunday 8:30am, 10:30am, 12:30pm.**

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Spanish: stfrancisa2.com/misa

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